

COSMOPOLITAN OPTIONS

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This paper deals with a critique of the concept of cosmopolitanism. It argues that the 'old' concept of cosmopolitanism is a trope of Western, enlightened and secular universalism. As such, it was part of Western imperialism. It is not always recognized as such by postcolonial studies that celebrate hybridity and multicultural creativity. The paper goes on to argue that the recognition of continuing civilizational plurality in the world should not lead one to assume essentialized boundaries between civilizations which would make the notion of cosmopolitanism impossible. Instead one should recognize different cosmopolitan projects in the world which encounter each other in mega cities around the globe.

It does not seem very difficult to draw a picture of the cosmopolitan person. Recently, this has been done by the anthropologist Ulf Hannerz and his description fits one's expectations: "... genuine cosmopolitanism is first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other. It entails an intellectual and esthetic openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity" (Hannerz 1996: 103). The picture, drawn by Hannerz, refers to enlightened intellectuals and foremost to the anthropologist. It is a quite flattering image, an ideal towards which to aspire. The counter-image is one of the parochial individual, tied down by the narrow confines of 'local' life, and therefore simply not interested in different people or different customs. Cosmopolitanism is often seen as a liberating alternative to ethnic and nationalist chauvinism. However, one does want to ask what intellectual and esthetic openness entails and on what terms one engages the Other. Turning one's attention to the colonial period, one cannot deny that missionaries and colonial officers had a willingness to engage with the Other. In that connection I have always understood Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other* – with its emphasis on the 'coevalness' of the Other – as a profoundly missionary book, one that theologically interprets why missionaries and the anthropologists have had difficulties in 'recognizing' the Other (see Fabian 1983). In this regard, anthropologists are not that different from missionaries and colonial officers, since each shares an enabling condition of engagement, namely Western imperialism. In this paper I want to first examine cosmopolitanism as a trope of colonial and secular modernity, before briefly exploring how a postcolonial cosmopolitanism might appear.

The concept of the cosmopolitan as an intellectual, one who is not limited by the local culture of his place of upbringing, is a trope of secular modernity. In gendered terms the cosmopolitan is obviously a man; an

individual who has the ability to live anywhere and the capacity to tolerate and understand the barbarism of others. The trope emerges in early 19th century England, a period that was marked by the simultaneous expansion of imperialism and nationalism. These two historical formations belong together, since the nation-state emerges within an expanding world-system (see van der Veer and Lehmann 1999). Their intimate connection is already well expressed in Adam Smith's thinking about the tension between the fiscal nature of the state and global free trade. It is in the context of his writing on political economy that in 1848 John Stuart Mill refers to capital as becoming more and more 'cosmopolitan'. Cosmopolitanism is the Western engagement with the rest of the world and that engagement is a colonial one that simultaneously transcends the national boundaries as it is tied to them. Instead of perceiving cosmopolitanism and nationalism as alternatives one should perhaps recognize them as the poles in a dialectical relationship. The importance of imperial migration for nationalism is perhaps clearest in the 'pioneer' nationalisms of the Americas and some of the later nationalist movements in Europe, Asia and Africa (see Anderson 1991; van der Veer 1995a). But more generally, it is important to consider the development of cultural nationalism in Western Europe in the context of empire-building (see Said 1993). National culture in Britain, for instance, nationalizes the imperial encounter and reflects upon the mission of the nation in the empire, while cosmopolitanism is based upon the possibilities of encounter as given in empire (see Baucom 1999; van der Veer 2001).

In Daniel Lerner's classic *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958) one finds the argument that Western modernity has depended principally on "the mobile personality" – that is, on a type of person eager to move, to change and to invent. Lerner argued that empathy defined the mobile personality, and he glossed 'empathy' as "the capacity to see oneself in the other fellow's situation." In a fascinating comment on Lerner, Shakespearean scholar Stephen Greenblatt suggests that what Professor Lerner calls 'empathy', Shakespeare calls 'Iago'. The connection is the idea of improvisation, that is "the ability both to capitalize on the unforeseen and to transform given materials into one's own scenario" (Greenblatt 1980). The basis of empathy is thus the power to become involved in the lifeworld of the Other and to transform it. Such power is neither good nor bad, but it is also never completely disinterested.¹

Secularity is a characteristic of cosmopolitanism. Liberal thinkers, from John Stuart Mill to Ernest Gellner, tend to assume that religious affiliation restricts the believer to the absolutist claims of religion and condemns him to intolerance. Colonizing modernity therefore denies its roots in a Christian,

¹ The references to Lerner 1958 and Greenblatt 1980 are taken from Asad 1993: 11-12.

European past and rather claims for itself a cosmopolitan openness to other civilizations. This is an openness to understanding, however with a desire to bring progress and improvement, a cosmopolitanism with a moral mission. This is quite explicit in such projects as British utilitarianism, French 'mission civilisatrice', and Dutch 'Ethische Politiek'. There is not a desire to spread Christianity, but the desire to spread the morality of the modern nation-state, the cosmopolitanism of the colonial empire.

A further understanding of these qualities of 'empathy' and 'improvisation' embodied in the cosmopolitan as a mobile personality is reached perhaps if we look at the problem of cultural translation. Translation is the activity in which the cosmopolitan in his open engagement with the Other has to excel and it shows exactly that some languages are weaker than others. Talal Asad has argued that

because the languages of third world societies are seen as weaker in relation to Western languages (and today, especially English), they are more likely to submit to forcible transformation in the translation process than the other way around. The reason for this is, first, that in their political-economic relations with third world countries, Western nations have the greater ability to manipulate the latter. And, second, Western languages produce and deploy desired knowledge more readily than third world languages do (Asad 1993: 190).

If we speak of cultural translation we, of course, understand that this implies a conversion of one conceptual framework into another which is more powerful and thus more universal. Difficulties of this sort have been discussed at length by the anthropologist Needham (1972). He points out that most languages do not have an equivalent for the English 'belief'. In a fascinating book on translation and conversion in Tagalog society in the Philippines in the late 16th century Vicente Rafael has argued that conversion (changing one thing into something else) is synonymous with translation (changing one language into another). The language of the Other had to be converted into a language that could carry the holy message. The indeterminacy of translation creates a field of interaction that is riddled with anxiety (see Rafael 1993).

The issue of translation and conversion not only raises the question of the power of languages, but also that of differences in colonial trajectories and languages of conquest. There are considerable differences between being colonized by the Spanish, the Portuguese, the French, the British, or the Dutch. By having Spanish as the colonial language one enters into colonial cosmopolitanism in a rather different manner than those conquered by the British. A colonial language, like Spanish, can be used as a medium of resistance against American hegemony in Latin America, for example, while it becomes at the same time a significant rival in the heartland of Global English, the

USA.

The cosmopolitan person is not only a translator, but also a spy who commands more languages than the people he spies upon as well as the ability to translate their languages into the language of the rulers. It is the ultimate colonial fantasy, well expressed in Kipling's writings, that the colonial hero has a perfect grasp of the language and the customs of the 'natives,' the 'locals,' but still in his crossing over remains true to himself and returns to his own world where he uses his acquired knowledge for the improvement of colonial rule. Interesting enough, westernized natives in the colonized areas were not considered capable of crossing over, but are ridiculed as impostors, as wogs.

Undoubtedly, the best Dutch realization of the cosmopolitan as spy was Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936), one of the greatest orientalist students of Muslim Law. In 1884 he went to Jeddah to study the Haj and in 1885 he converted to Islam to be able to enter Mecca. He was financially supported by the Dutch colonial ministry, which needed information about Muslims from the Dutch Indies who stayed in Mecca. Not only the Dutch, but all colonial governments had a theory that Muslims the world over might unite in a 'panislamism' which would present a serious threat to colonial rule, with Mecca playing a crucial role in this worldwide conspiracy. Snouck's expert knowledge on the Aceh Muslims in Mecca later made him a perfect political advisor for Muslim affairs in the Dutch Indies. His policy advice became crucial in the military campaign of the Dutch to repress a Muslim rebellion in Aceh, the bloodiest episode in Dutch colonial history. Questions of whether or not Snouck had really been converted to Islam and whether or not he had secretly married in the Dutch Indies with one or two Muslim wives are still hotly debated in Holland. I recently heard from an historian in Leiden, where Snouck is revered as the patron-saint of Oriental Studies, that some considered opening Snouck's grave to see whether or not he had been buried in the direction of Mecca. Whatever the results might be of such a dramatic empirical step, it is certain to all parties in this debate that Snouck was truly a cosmopolitan man (see van der Veer 1995b).

Cosmopolitanism is thus not only a trope of modernity, but more specifically of colonial modernity. It is therefore ironic to see in some postcolonial writing the celebration of a cosmopolitanism that is rooted in colonial modernity. The American literary critic Homi Bhabha is especially quite exuberant in his description of the possibilities of migrant populations, of subjects who have been 'formed-in-between':

Such cultures of a post-colonial contra-modernity may be contingent to modernity, discontinuous or in contention with it, resistant to its oppressive, assimilationist technologies; but they also deploy the cultural hybridity of their borderline conditions to 'translate,' and therefore reinscribe, the social

imagery of both metropolis and modernity (Bhabha 1993: 6).

In my view, however, Bhabha does not find a contra-modernity, but rather a modernity that invites intellectuals from the postcolonial territory not only to receive and accept it as in Macaulayan project of educating the natives, but also to become agents themselves in its reproduction after the demise of the colony-metropole divide. The racial distinction between natives and metropolitans becomes obsolete and to be replaced with the notion that anyone can be cosmopolitan, as long as one remains open, mobile, and improvisatory.

The celebration of hybridity, syncretism and multiculturalism in postcolonial studies needs to be critically examined (see van der Veer 1997: 90-105). Bhabha's claim that one can bring newness into the world, that one can reinvent the self when one is writing literature from the cultural interstices, is a conceit of the literature-producing and consuming world. Literary texts are themselves the locus of self-fashioning in modern, bourgeois culture. Literature has replaced religious texts as a source of elevated reflection about the nature of the self. Salman Rushdie's literary work which is taken as a prime example of cosmopolitan writing by Bhabha, is one that serves this function, to replace religious texts with literary secularity. What is remarkable in Rushdie's work is the extent to which it feeds on Indian culture and Muslim and Hindu religious traditions. It translates these materials for a Western audience in precisely the way Stephen Greenblatt describes Shakespeare's Iago.

My argument, so far, has been that cosmopolitanism is best understood as a form of improvisation and translation that characterized colonial modernity and has insinuated itself in the multicultural hybridity celebrated in postcolonial literary studies. My suggestion is that the cosmopolitanism of the 19th and early 20th centuries can be 'provincialized,' that it can be shown to be a 'view from somewhere' that is universalized through colonialism. To gain an understanding of the cosmopolitanism that is characteristic of the postcolonial period, one should perhaps recognize the failure of the universalization of Western, secular modernity and examine the nature of new, global encounters and the cosmopolitan options that they make possible. There are, at least, two ways of accomplishing this. The first, which I reject, is based upon a recognition of the fact that the old cosmopolitanism was rooted in Western civilization and that it has failed to become truly universal. This recognition results in an attempt to revive pre-national, civilizational boundaries which cannot be transcended by a universalizing project, although it should result in a cosmopolitan and multicultural respect for difference. I am referring here to the civilizational theory of Samuel Huntington (see Huntington 1996; and my critique in van der Veer 1999: 311-328). I will describe this argument in some detail and then proceed to an alternative, which I endorse, namely to attempt to understand cosmopolitanism through

an examination of cosmopolitan projects in global cities.

Civilizations and cosmopolitanism

If cosmopolitanism is a sign of Enlightenment universalism, one must come to the conclusion that the cultural resistances against it have not diminished, but increased. According to Samuel Huntington, “the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural ... The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future” (Huntington 1996: 22). Huntington argues for a new kind of cosmopolitanism that recognizes civilizational difference. He does away with the application of the term ‘civilization’ as a universalist Western standard to judge societies. He emphasizes the lack of universal standards and the existence of essential differences between civilizations that have their own normative standards. In his view there cannot be a universal civilization, since the central elements of any civilization, language and religion, do not show any sign of developing into one universal language or one universal religion (see Huntington 1996: 57). Religion is taken by Huntington to be the defining characteristic of a civilization and he points out that secularization does not seem to take place in most parts of the world.

Huntington also rejects the view that modernization means Westernization. He chooses thus the particularistic option in his use of the term ‘civilization’ and ends up with a set of irreducibly different, but modern civilizations which together make up the world order. By recognizing civilizational difference and by abandoning the project of a universalizing Western modernity – especially in terms of universal human rights – Huntington proposes a cosmopolitanism that is characterized by non-interference.

One way of interpreting Huntington’s move to the civilizational level is to relate it to the perceived crisis of the nation-state under the pressure of globalization. It is hard to deny that we have witnessed in the contemporary period a significant increase in the speed and frequency with which people, goods and information move across the boundaries of states. The question is at what extent and in what direction does this globalization transform or replace a populations’s identification with their national culture. If 95 percent of the population increase will be in the poorest regions of the world one needs not have to be a prophet of doom to predict that migration to wealthier regions of the world has only just begun. Contrary to what one might think, however, migration may reinforce nationalism rather than weaken it.

The question I raise here is the following: What role does religion play in the dialectics between the national and the transnational? World religions, by their very nature, transcend national boundaries. It is true for Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and to a lesser extent, Hinduism, that religions have a

message for mankind. They have, traditionally, been organized in a global fashion that serves to further their worldwide expansion or, to put it in religious terms, is part of a missionary project. Nevertheless, religion has been used in a great many cases to build national cultures. The tension between the local and the global, between the national and the transnational is therefore not at all novel for religions.

What can be argued, however, is that new possibilities emerge in the transnational element of religion owing to the growth of transnational migration. In fact, we do see the flourishing of large transnational religious movements, such as Pentecostalism in Christianity, the Tablighi Jama'at in Islam, and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad in Hinduism. Interestingly, it is this particular Muslim movement that – contrary to Western expectations – is avowedly apolitical and not aligned to nationalist politics. Wordly affairs do not matter directly for it. The view is that the world will improve when every Muslim simply tries to be a good Muslim through the fulfillment of his duties. However, this stance does have political consequences. The message that it conveys to migrants presents a perfect defense against assimilation. In this sense the movement may strongly conflict with the policies of certain states. What we have is a globalized movement that tries to create safe, communal havens for the faithful away from the influence of a globalized market culture. Despite ubiquitous discourses on the universal community of Islam, the 'umma, there is a clear tendency towards localization, towards becoming involved in the politics of one's nation-state, when those politics (as in the case of veiling at school) affect one's communal life. Present in this is an Islamic cosmopolitanism that has come into conflict with secular (Christian) cosmopolitanism in a number of sites both in the Middle East (Turkey, Algeria) and in Western Europe.

On the contrary, The Vishwa Hindu Parishad has explicit political aims and is deeply involved in the project of Hindu nationalism, as it is directly allied to the Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party). It is highly successful in India where it is the largest political force, but it is also prominent among Hindu migrants in the USA, the Caribbean, Britain, and South Africa and truly wherever one finds Hindu communities in Diaspora. Again, it is fascinating to see a Hindu cosmopolitanism that is posed as an alternative to a secular (Christian) one, exemplified by the VHP's criticism of the Noble Prize awarding to Amartya Sen which was denounced as a Christian conspiracy.

The Pentecostalist movements, finally, are often deeply involved in the politics of national culture in the societies in which they are active. There is no evidence that globalization and transnational projects impair the contribution that religion makes toward the creation of the various world nationalisms.

Why did Huntington's theory receive so much attention? It is perhaps illuminating to examine the use made of civilizational ideas, such as those of Huntington, in Europe. Huntington writes about the West as an Atlantic world, joining the US and Western Europe, but it is in Europe and especially in the Mediterranean region where the civilizational borders between Islam and Christianity are drawn.

When the Wall fell, discussions about the future of Germany were held between 'Wessies' and 'Ossies'. What was forgotten, as usual, was that Berlin, the new capital of a unified Germany, is the third largest Turkish city in the world (after Ankara and Istanbul). Indeed, what is the place of Turkey and that of Turkish citizens who reside in Western Europe? Is the border between Muslim Turkey and Christian Greece the significant border for a unified Europe and is it internally reproduced as a boundary between secular Christian citizens and religiously-minded Muslim residents? Affirmative answers to this questions seem to be the implicit message of a summit of European Christian-Democrats under the leadership of the then German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl. These Christian politicians want to deny Turkey membership in Europe since it does not belong to Christian civilization.

Present is the long-standing competition and enmity between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire, of which the Bosnian war, the Bulgarian troubles, the Kosovo crisis, the tense relation between Greece and Turkey are the historical offshoots. It is fair, however, to be reminded of the fact that there has not been an Islamic military threat to Europe since the defeat of the Ottomans at the gates of Vienna in 1683. On the contrary, European powers have colonized large parts of the Ottoman empire in the 19th century. The struggle has been won by the Western powers and it has led to the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of the modern, secular nation-state of Turkey. Nevertheless, the old question from the colonial period emerges again, but now it emerges in the metropolises of the former colonizing nations. Are people of other race, other religion capable of reaching the endpoint of civilizational evolution – of achieving European cosmopolitan modernity? To what extent can Muslims become modern; to what extent can they be equal to modern Christians? What we have here is a tension between the universal principles of the Enlightenment and their rootedness in Christian civilization. The Christian-Democrats want to put the struggle between secularist and fundamentalist Muslims in Turkey outside of Europe without engaging the fact that that struggle also takes place within their own global cities.

Migration from Islamic countries is one of the political issues most alive in Western Europe. Despite the political rethoric (especially in France and Germany) the presence of large groups of Muslims, as in an earlier period there were large groups of Jews, is a fact that will continue to disrupt any

civilizational illusions that might be held about the Christian West and the non-Christian rest. The struggle is really for the acceptance of the stranger without the desire to obliterate him through either assimilation or multiculturalism. There are differences in the world and, as Montaigne already observed, “each calls that Barbarism what is not his own practice.” To live with each other’s barbarism – without violence, in one and the same multicultural society – is the challenge of the 21st century.

Although the issue of multiculturalism is not straightforwardly examined in Huntington’s book, it does seem to motivate his entire project. As he puts it at the end of his book in the following, revealing passage:

Some Americans have promoted multiculturalism at home; some have promoted universalism abroad; and some have done both. Multiculturalism at home threatens the United States and the West, universalism abroad threatens the West and the World. Both deny the uniqueness of Western culture. The global monoculturalists want to make the world like America. The domestic multiculturalists want to make America like the world. A multicultural America is impossible because a non-Western America is not American. A multicultural world is unavoidable because global empire is impossible. The preservation of the United States and the West requires the renewal of Western identity. The security of the world requires acceptance of global multiculturalism (Huntington 1996: 318).

This ideological message deals with a real issue, one faced not only by the United States, but also by a great number of other societies, namely the issue of multiculturalism versus cultural assimilation. This issue cannot be solved, however, by projecting multiculturalism out of domestic politics onto the stage of world politics.

Cosmopolitanism and global cities

Nowadays we find the cosmos in the polis and often it looks like chaos. The postcolonial cities of today show a massive deprovincialization of the world or, one may say, a new cosmopolitanism. While the old cosmopolitanism separated the colony and the metropole both spatially and intellectually, metropolises now contain a wide spectrum of immigrants from everywhere. Clifford Geertz expresses this with his usual rethorical flourish:

As the entanglements of everybody with everybody else have grown in recent times to the point where everyone is tripping over everyone’s feet and everyone is in everyone’s face, its disruptive power, its capacity to induce doubts in those who think they have things figured out, taped, under control, rapidly increases. We live in a bazar, not a cathedral; a whirl, not a diagram, and this makes it difficult for anyone anymore to be wholly at ease

with his or her own ideas, no matter how official, no matter how cherished, no matter how plated with certainty (Geertz 1994: 167).

There are a variety of responses to this situation. One of them is indeed non-interference or even indifference. Hannerz argues correctly that this attitude is not cosmopolitanism, since it is the attitude of sticking to one's own. As we have seen, genuine cosmopolitanism in his view is a willingness to engage with the Other and we have already analysed and critiqued what the terms of engagement are under colonial conditions. The question, again, is what are the conditions and terms of engagement in the global cities of today? In an essay on the cultural role of world cities Hannerz uses, approvingly, a quotation from V.S. Naipaul as his motto:

Cities like London were to change. They were to cease being more or less national cities; they were to become cities of the world, modern-day Romes, establishing the pattern of what great cities should be, in the eyes of islanders like myself and people even more remote in language and culture. They were to be cities visited for learning and elegant goods and manners and freedom by all the barbarian peoples of the globe, people of forest and desert, Arabs, Africans, Malays (Naipaul 1987: 141-142, quoted in Hannerz 1996: 127).

Again, we see here that the cultural engagement is perceived as an attempt to uplift the 'great unwashed,' now constituted by groups of very different cultural backgrounds. Naipaul is, of course, one of the great believers in a universal civilization, one rooted in the Enlightenment, and is not at all sympathetic to the persistence of what he perceives as backward cultures, composed predominantly of the anti-rational religious kind. He is a representative of the cosmopolitanism analysed in the beginning of this paper. But is this the only possibility of engagement in the global city?

We see in global cities predominantly a cultural engagement within the context of a politics of immigration (see Holton and Appadurai 1996; also, about Bombay, Hansen 1999). These cities are a product of the increased mobility of capital and labor and they are the sites of new notions of membership, solidarity, and violence. Particularly interesting are the new social movements which mobilize outsiders to gain access to housing, property, sanitation, health services, education, child care, employment, and protection. Those already established respond to these claims by developing more and more elaborate security measures, creating walled enclaves within the city. Ghettos, ethnic neighborhoods, enclaves are the conditions of engagement in the global city. Gender and communal identities are newly constructed in the encounter with the Other which is often anonymous and indifferent, but sometimes violent when spatial markings of identity are violated. Nothing is fixed and settled in the urban space, outsiders today are the insiders of tomorrow and the demands of the globalized network society prevent a

reflexive life-planning for most people except a small elite (see Castells 1997).

Much of the cultural engagement in the global cities in the world is a reaction to the enormous dislocations of modern flexible capital and labour. People do try to build enclaves of communal identity and violently stake their claims to ownership of the city. Their engagement with the Other is not necessarily pleasant. Nevertheless, I believe that it is in these urban arenas that new sources of the self, in religious, gender, and political terms develop. If we are looking for a postcolonial cosmopolitanism it is the global city that must be examined. I do not want to be restricted by Baudrillard's description of postmodern culture as immediate and bland, transparent and fast-moving, a blip on the screen, impelled by commercialism, without depth, without place. In fact, locality is produced by global forces and the global city is a real domain in which cosmopolitanism emerges as a pattern of inclusion and exclusion in the public sphere. Transnational movements that help migrants to cope with the conditions of migration and labour flexibility, such as the Tablighi Jama'at in Islam, do not simply build religious enclaves, safe havens of the self, but creatively develop new religious understandings of their predicament, entailing an encounter with the multiplicity of Others on their own terms. It is impossible to simply call these movements closed, confined and confining, provincial as against cosmopolitan. They carry cosmopolitan projects, that is they engage the Other, but they emerge from quite different histories than those of the European Enlightenment.

Global cities are located everywhere, from Hongkong to Rio de Janeiro, from Bombay to Los Angeles; they are no longer the metropolises of colonial empires. The global imageries at play in these cities are just as multi-centred. I met a Pakistani taxi-driver in New York who was saving money to study Islamic science in Teheran and I regularly travel in aeroplanes with Hindu grandmothers who reside both in India and the US and connect their grandchildren to a culture that is constantly negotiated in New York and San Francisco. The 19th century bourgeois project of cosmopolitanism is no longer possible in the global cities of today, since the differences are too substantial, the diasporic communications too frequent. As Pnina Werbner has recently argued about working-class Pakistani cosmopolitans, labour migration forges global pathways, routes along which Islamic and familial transnational worlds are constituted (see Werbner 1999). It is not known how the postmodern, postcolonial cosmopolitanism will appear and perhaps the term cosmopolitanism must altogether be rejected when it continues to carry the meanings of colonialism and the European Enlightenment. Whether the new engagements and confrontations in the global cities of the world are called cosmopolitan, global, or transnational is less important than it is to understand that the new global cities are the location of a number of different projects of engagement with the Other – among them Islamic, Hindu, Pentecostalist, en-

vironmentalist, gay and feminist Others.

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ESCOLHAS COSMOPOLITAS

Este artigo desenvolve-se em torno de uma crítica do conceito de cosmopolitismo, argumentando que o "velho" conceito de cosmopolitismo é uma figura do universalismo ocidental, iluminado e secular. Enquanto tal, foi parte integrante do imperialismo ocidental. Hoje é assim reconhecido pelos estudos pós-coloniais que celebram a hibridéz e a criatividade multicultural. Argumenta-se ainda que o reconhecimento de uma pluralidade civilizacional no mundo não deverá conduzir à assunção de fronteiras essencializadas entre civilizações, o que tornaria impossível a noção de cosmopolitismo. Em vez disso, devemos reconhecer que existem diferentes projectos cosmopolitas no mundo, projectos esses que se encontram nas mega-cidades do globo.

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